

DICKSON, J. McKAY.

Rutherford

Edmonton's "original sin"; the story of the city's invisible government. 1916.

Ratepayers Attention!

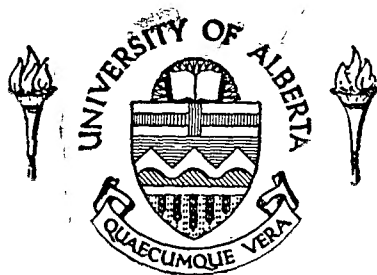
**EDMONTON'S
"ORIGINAL
SIN"**

**THE STORY OF THE CITY'S INVISIBLE
GOVERNMENT, BY**

J. McK. DICKSON

**SETTING FORTH THE POLITICAL MANIPULA-
TION WHICH, IF NOT STOPPED, WILL
PLUNGE EDMONTON IN RUIN**

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EDMONTON'S "ORIGINAL SIN"

The political shadow that must be cleared from the City's atmosphere if light and air is to be permitted to enter. The Cause of our latest "Mayoral muddle."

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INVISIBLE GOVERNMENT IN EDMONTON

Some weeks ago the friends of Mayor Henry asked him if he was prepared to submit his name for nomination for another term as Mayor. He replied that the retiral of the manager of the firm of Blowey & Henry, the contemplated purchase of his partner's interest in the business, and the fact that competition in the furniture business was beginning to be keener, necessitated him setting aside all thought of occupying the Mayor's chair for another year. Some days later, the press published a formal statement in which the Mayor declared his intention of retiring from municipal administration. Things moved a trifle fast immediately following the publication of the Mayor's statement. At once there appeared a number of mayoral candidates, including Alderman Macdonald, ex-Alderman Bellamy, Messrs. R. S. Mackenzie and the writer. This appeared to some citizens as an undesirable situation, inasmuch as the election of a Mayor from such a field seemed likely to result in the election of a minority mayor—that is, a mayor elected by a minority of the electorate. Later on, the press seemed determined to inject ex-Alderman Clarke into the field, and before he had made any statement that would in any way imply that he intended making the fifth candidate to the contest, openly announced him as a candidate.

The first point about the Mayoral situation which the elector should consider is that Mayor Henry was thoroughly conversant with the City's state when he decided to retire. Granting that the wild expenditures of previous years had created a large capital debt; granting that the failure to collect taxes, or the unwillingness of past real estate administrations to collect from themselves, had created a large current debt, these facts were

more the possession of Mayor Henry than any other man in the City with the possible exception of the Finance Controller. The Mayor, however, had been gradually losing caste with the man behind the Bulletin, so much so that the name of that august dictator of the destinies of Edmonton had appeared on three petitions for the purpose of calling meetings at which the Mayor was to be submitted to some criticism. The reason for the increasing desire of "Honest" Frank Oliver to make a change in the Mayor of Edmonton is not hard to divine. The discredited ex-Minister will confront the electors of West Edmonton federal riding within a year to seek re-election to the Ottawa House. Void of the qualities necessary in a public man, with a reputation so completely shattered by the Ferguson report on his administration of the Department of the Interior that it never again can be pieced together, the "Honest" One realized that it would require a million h.p. derrick to raise him back into office. It was but a brief step from such a realization to the decision that the municipal administration of the City should be prostituted to the doubtful task of securing a re-election, which a direct appeal to the people would never secure.

The discredited ex-Minister had made his selection for the occupancy of the position of Mayor for 1917. In his general scheming he had elected to the position of chairman of the West Edmonton Federal Riding Liberal Association (by setting aside another election at which he himself was present, and by the creation of a hand-picked convention), ex-Alderman J. M. MacDonald, a faithful henchman, who had even been prepared to drop his moral reform and Liberal convictions and campaign for a Conservative candidate, accompanied by a drayload of liquor, in the Edson district in 1913. With such a man in the Mayor's chair, Oliver was evidently of the opinion that the machinery of civic administration, including police, was sufficient to put him over in the face of public opinion. Given a campaign manager whose methods of electioneering knew no moral bounds, who was also Mayor and head of a civic organization with 800 employees, and the game might be as easy as it was when with hordes of homestead, timber and fishery inspectors, he swamped a hero and a gentleman of the stamp of Colonel Gribesach in the election held during September of 1916. Such was the scheme to which Edmonton's interests were about to be subserved, when it was realized that the whole story of the corruption and degradation of civic life was in possession

of those who were prepared to tell it to the people. Brazen and unconscionable as it was, the support of the Edmonton Journal was almost obtained, and an attempt made to secure the endorsement of the Property Owners' Association and the Board of Trade. But the record of "Clean City Jim" and his evident and sinister relationship with the "Honest" One, made it impossible to put over the deal. "Jim" went through all the motions demanded of him by his master: he resigned as alderman, announced his intention to contest the mayoralty, and whenever the Master Mechanic behind the scenes pulled the wires, he went through his genuflections like a well-made Nuremberg marionette. The churches were to be deluged with the religious record and early piety of the candidate. The women voters, still unsophisticated as to the deep wiles of the "Honest" One, whose administration of public office is now considered a reflection on the political intelligence of Edmonton's citizens, were to be informed of how solicitous the Oliver candidate was to grant the franchise to women; although in reality he had sought to prevent it to the limit of his power. The stage was set, the drama was about to be enacted, when suddenly like a bolt from the blue "Jim's" Edson record of combining bootlegging with electioneering appeared like a grim skeleton from the cupboard. Mr. R. S. Mackenzie, Secretary of the Property Owners' Association, evidently learned of the move, and the dangers to the civic machinery if it were permitted, and with rapidity and judgment he blocked the attempt to use the Association for such doubtful purposes. How close was the call, however, can be realized when one sees the name of the President of the Board of Trade, Mr. H. M. E. Evans, on the nomination paper of ex-Alderman MacDonald, the near Oliver organizer-mayor, in his endeavor to get back into the Council.

This situation forced the wily and "Honest" One to attempt a new move, of the nature of a recovery play. He at once demanded that, if he could not have MacDonald as Mayor, that W. T. Henry be forced to run for a second term. To this the other "prominent citizens" acceded, with the result of the notorious shuffle which resulted in the retreat of ex-Alderman Bellamy and "Jim" of "Clean City" fame. Mayor Henry was forced to make the sacrifice play, and has since shouldered the load assigned to him by Oliver, after having refused it from more reputable sources. It is to be said to the credit of numbers of those who added weight to the demand that the political scheme

J. M. McDONALD, PRESIDENT FRANK OLIVER'S ELECTION COMMITTEE,
STUMPING FOR CONSERVATIVE CANDIDATE, 1913 GENERAL ELECTION.
WHAT'S IN THE BOTTLES?



NEAR MAYORAL CANDIDATE "CLEAN CITY" JIM MACDONALD, campaigning in the Edson Constituency against Attorney-General C. W. Cross, for the Conservative candidate, R. Verge. This picture was taken at Dyke, on the Grand Trunk Railway, at a railway camp. Included in the picture are some of the most notorious bootleggers known to the West foothill country, all of whom viewed the possibility of the election of the Attorney-General with dread, and accepted the efforts of "Clean City" Jim as something aiding towards a continuance of their illicit business.

"Clean City" Jim Macdonald will be found under the sign of the double cross.

be upset, that they numbered many men who have been supporters of the discredited ex-Minister, and the citizens are to be congratulated on the failure of the scheme.

The incident, however, carries with it a serious and necessary lesson to the people of Edmonton. Their future as a city depends upon how they act in the light of it. As was aptly said at the annual meeting of ratepayers, the politician who directs the Bulletin in its libellous career, is Edmonton's "Original Sin," that doctrine of theology which teaches the impossibility of right conduct when at the fountainhead of action pollution exists. Edmonton, in giving prestige and power to one as unscrupulous in its use as the so-called "Honest" One, has poisoned the very source of public information and corrupted the whole organ of public business. Paralysis and decay spring from such a condition in virtue of unchanging moral laws. The record of the manipulation of public business for the private aggrandisement of a few is the record of the obstacles which our soldiers are seeking to overcome in their fight for the security of Empire, it is a record of the inefficiency which is gradually being weeded out of every department of our public life—and which must be weeded out if success and continuance of existence is to be assured.

The Bulletin has been the advocate of all the wild-spending administrations of the past ten years. It has sought to shift the burden of responsibility on to the administration of 1914, because the Mayor of that year openly attacked "Honest" Frank in an interview in Ottawa, and published in the press of that city. The ratepayers of the city have only to refer to the City's Annual Report to find that the addition to the general debt of the city by that administration was merely a trifle over \$377,000, approximately one-thirtieth of the whole amount, and just double what the Bulletin created ten years ago in the interest of its friend and stockholder the Grand Trunk Railway Company. As a matter of fact, Oliver has never shown any interest or desire to aid Edmonton in the problems of economy and efficiency upon which her future depends. His newspaper has advocated almost every wasteful expenditure that has taken place for the past ten years, not omitting the Civic Centre. Ten years ago the bonuses to the Grand Trunk Railway were voted upon by the burgesses. In the City's Annual Report for this year, on page 30, will be found the two by-laws, Nos. 7 and 75, the first for one hundred thousand dollars, the second for seventy-five thousand dollars.

Oliver's newspaper blared forth the headlines advising the citizens to launch the municipality in these expenditures, which were entirely unnecessary and made to a corporation capitalized at several hundred millions by a population of about eight thousand people, and which actually increased the per capita debt of that time by about \$22. It was represented as a proper public step for the little village of that day to make the donation, and the Bulletin and its proprietor represented themselves as public-spirited agents actively engaged in promoting public well-being, but what were the actual facts? The truth was that the Bulletin has been shown to have received the sum of \$15,000 from the corporation for its work in increasing the debt of Edmonton—for diverting its public monies for private uses. The evidence of this newspaper graft is contained in the report of Commissioner Ferguson, and from the debate on that report, the following extract of the speech of Mr. R. B. Bennett may be quoted:

R. B. BENNETT ON FRANK OLIVER

Mr. Speaker, one would think, sir, that after having exhausted every known means by which to exploit the public domain to the limit, the fishes in the sea, the heavens above the earth, and the water under it, my hon. friend opposite would have been content. NO, PUBLIC OPINION MUST BE CORRUPTED WITH A SUBSIDIZED PRESS. The hon. member for Edmonton, in his own person, stood here today, as the proprietor nominally, and as the editor in fact, of a Grit journal that existed by the money of a great transportation and service company for the purpose of corrupting public opinion. These are the indictments which this report makes against these gentlemen—CONSPIRACY, FRAUD, DERELICTION OF DUTY, BREACH OF TRUST, AND, ABOVE ALL, A DELIBERATE ATTEMPT AND INTENT TO DESTROY AND CORRUPT PUBLIC OPINION. What, sir, happened in Alberta? At the very time that the hon. gentleman from Edmonton was negotiating a little deal with Mr. Frank Scott of the Grand Trunk Pacific, at the very moment that he was inducing him by honeyed words to put \$15,000 into his great journal, that great daily and fireside journal, his henchmen had charge of the campaign in which the ballot boxes were robbed. If any man is curious tonight to know in what manner public opinion was dealt with during those days, let him go to the Parliament Library and read the Edmonton Bulletin of those days. Ah, sir, I am a personal sufferer; I HAVE BEEN THE VICTIM OF THE \$15,000 FILCHED FROM THIS PUBLIC COMPANY; I HAVE BEEN THE SUBJECT OF THESE ATTACKS OF HIRED ASSASSINS; I know whereof I speak, and I speak feelingly. The people of the province in which I live suspected that these men had not suddenly grown so wealthy that they had thousands of dollars to cast around the streets in taking around this gang of camp followers who went to the polls throughout the province; we did not believe that they had suddenly found the wealth in the



soil and dug it out and spread it around in this way; but little did the confiding electorate of Alberta believe that the great stalwart, sturdy, determined, outspoken, grimly honest man, as he said, had sold for \$15,000 the independence of the press. What will they say when they find that these attacks that have been made upon the public men in the province in which I live, who do not see eye to eye with some hon. gentlemen opposite, were \$15,000 of interest speaking?..When the hon. gentleman the other day in such measured tones deprecated the passing of the legislation that we are about to pass dealing with the Grand Trunk Pacific, when he expressed the great fear that he did that vested interests would be interfered with; that the credit of the Grand Trunk Pacific would be interfered with, little did we think that \$15,000 of interest was speaking.

Ah, sir, it is indeed a sad spectacle. A long career of great usefulness to his friends and himself is about ended. I have stood as chairman of a great public gathering and introduced on a Dominion Day my hon. friend the member for Edmonton as a citizen of whom we might well be proud; I have pointed out those sterling qualities that have made for him a great place in the state; I have pointed out those qualities of heart and mind that he had from the day when he crossed from Winnipeg to Edmonton until he sat here as a Minister of the Crown, little dreaming that such a report as this would indicate of how little value was my confidence in him. I speak the thoughts of the many thousands of the Province of Alberta who tomorrow morning will read my words; when they understand that this their one time idol has feet of clay, when they find that those feet of clay were strongly embedded around about the Bonaventure station in Montreal; and when they realize just exactly what his obligation and duty was to the Grand Trunk, they will say: At last our idol has fallen. It was only fitting that the right hon. gentleman who leads the Opposition should have entertained the same opinion, for tonight he deserted his one-time colleague and friend. Ah, well, my hon. friend from Edmonton after all was the heir to some of these things about which we have spoken today, and he did not create—nay, he only had to carry out. When one contemplates that, one might think that he would say with Wolsey: "Had I served my God as I have served my King, he would not have given me over in my old age to silence and contempt." If he were not so disposed to think in the words of Shakespeare, he might have thought in the words of the Psalmist: "If it were an enemy that had done this, I would be content;" but it was mine own familiar friend who took sweet counsel with me."

Deserted in the house of his friends, flung to the dogs, forgotten, remembered no more, the right hon. gentleman who led the Government for fifteen years, and had him as his colleague for six, speaks no word of commendation, no word of defence, no word of recognition of the sterling qualities that endeared him so to the people of the West. Gone, forgotten, remembered no more! Peace be with him! And so he passes from the public life of Canada, forgotten, I take it, for his leader has forgotten him, remembered no more except for the evil he has done and the legacy of evil he has left with us.

No one can read the foregoing remarks of the member for

Calgary without realizing what a tremendous handicap Edmonton possesses in having as a representative such a member of the Ottawa House as Oliver. Deserted by his own party, who realized what a millstone he was to their political future; treated with undisguised contempt by his opponents, it is evident that Edmonton's interests can receive no consideration at the hands of the Government while he is there. Can anyone doubt as to the reason that Edmonton battalions are sent to Sarcee, that Edmonton's interests are ignored? Edmonton must show to the Dominion that it stands for honesty and efficiency in public life before it can recover its lost prestige. To do that Oliver must be relegated to political obscurity.

In view of this instance of manipulation and interference with the government and administration of the City, the ratepayers must of necessity keep a watchful eye on the future actions of Oliver and his newspaper. Are Conservatives in Edmonton prepared to allow their city to be misruled and maladministered so that a discredited politician use its influence in the endeavor to beat a gentleman and a soldier of the stamp of Colonel Griesbach? Colonel Griesbach is the candidate who is the choice of the West Edmonton Conservatives to contest that riding against "Honest" Frank. Is it to be believed that they are going to be so blind to what is due that gallant soldier, that they are prepared to allow the machinery of municipal government to be subverted to encompass his defeat? The duty of all fair-minded men, Liberal and Conservative alike, as well as the women of Edmonton, is to see that, without consideration of party, Colonel Griesbach's election is not stolen from him. To ensure this it is necessary for the friends of Mayor Henry to counsel him against even the suspicion of truckling or trading with Edmonton's "Original Sin." Mayor Henry has hitherto shown himself to be a man of some honor, despite some small flaws that are being uncovered in the heat of political criticism. If he is elected, as seems to be the wish of many, it should appear to those who are voting for him in the belief that they are so doing in the best interests of the city, that he should widely separate himself from the political chicanery and trickery that has forced him in the field to sacrifice another year of his time to the city, if elected. It is just as essential that he take a clear-cut stand against the wiles of Oliver as it is that he should oppose the waste of civic monies. The good name of the city is essential to its credit, and it is essential that it be maintained. It can only be maintained by a

strong stand against the political manipulation that has not infrequently been employed and has done so much to place the City in the backward position in which it is today.

The press, in its function of giving news to the people, has to be cleansed. The duty of the people in the matter is clear. Candidates named by newspaper proprietors may or may not be the best men. Edmonton's newspapers can lay little claim to public spirit or public honor. Rumors are current that any corporation coming into the city to transact business with the people that entails the procuring of a franchise is forced to submit itself to a "pay-as-you-enter" system which takes their breath away. A contract for advertising is submitted to them which means a virtual hold-up equal to that derived from the Grand Trunk Railway by Oliver and his newspaper. The time for firm action is now. The course to be adopted by supporters of Mayor Henry is to insist that he free himself from even the suspicion of collusion with the trickery that brought about our "mayoralty muddle." That is a stand that should be demanded from him, and one that it should be a pleasure and a duty for him to take. His future depends on it. The city's future depends upon it, and his friends should insist on a clear-cut declaration. A new era in Edmonton's life should be entered upon, and that demands a separation of Edmonton from its "Original Sin." The serious and important business of this city too long has been made a stepping-stone to higher things in political life by the politically unworthy. You alone, as ratepayers, can end this abuse from which you have suffered.

And now, as a parting statement, I may declare that it was on learning the "things behind" that I retired from the Mayoral contest. I entered it with no intention of selfish gain, and when I found that the destinies of this city were decided not by the votes of the citizens, but by the manipulation of political corruptionists, it seemed to be a fitting and proper task to acquaint you with their doings, and give you a peep behind the scenes.

The task of cleaning out the Augean stable is now with you. My portion of it was to indicate the putrefying mess that should be cleansed, and start all honest and right-thinking ratepayers to a disagreeable yet necessary and honorable task. If this printed explanation appears to you to fit the facts and explain the happenings, the best way you can thank its publisher is to at once

take action to see that the city receives a genuine and complete "saving," a different form of saving from the kind offered annually by the politically appointed and newspaper-touted candidates who for the past ten years have "saved" the city to the tune of thirty-five million dollars of debt.

J. McK. DICKSON.